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VEDISCHE STUDIEN. RICHARD PISCHEL und KARL F. GELDNER. Vol. I. Stuttgart, Kohlhammer. 1889. 8vo, pp. xxxiii., 328.

Although the Vedas have been studied by European investigators for one hundred years and by the Hindoo commentators for twenty-five centuries, the views of students concerning its myths and mythology are by no means to be regarded as settled. In the most ancient of the four Vedas, the Rigveda, there are a large number of slokas and longer passages which seem entirely disconnected with the rest of the text and are incomprehensible to us, perhaps on account of being misplaced in the text, or, as many suppose, in consequence of having been altered by copyists. Numerous words occurring only once throughout the whole extent of the Rigveda hymns aggravate the difficulties which we experience in interpreting their contents. Two professors of Halle, Richard Pischel and Karl F. Geldner, well known as Sanscritic specialists, are now publishing jointly their results of investigation in "Vedische Studien," a work of which the first volume is before us.

Their views of the social status in the Rigveda period greatly differ from those held by scientists thirty years ago, when they were supposed to represent a pure and undefiled, almost entirely pastoral, condition of Asiatic humanity. The social condition differed somewhat, but not considerably from that of the classic age of Sanskrit literature; they were no longer in the nomadic state, but lived in village communities (*grama*) and towns or cities (*púr*), partly walled, as they did also later on. Their houses, structures, and settlements were similar in many respects to those of the later period; they knew the use of salt, possessed the art of writing, and were acquainted with the ocean. In many passages the hymns, prayers, and songs speak of an eager scramble after the goods of this world, of golden and costly ornaments, and as the Mahabhârata period *hetairism* was a characteristic feature of the Vedic times.

Regarding the mythologic position of the Vedas and of the Rigveda in particular, the two joint editors of the "Studien" are emitting opinions founded upon thorough researches and which it will be impossible to scout or ignore. The Rigveda marks the epoch, they say, where the ancient gods representing powers of nature are yielding and vanishing before the deities of a new heavenly generation, which are centring around Indra, the Hindoo god *par excellence*. The ancient natural gods are Aryan; to these belong Sûrya, Parjanya, and others, all belonging to the "dynasty" of Varuna. But the god Indra, the most thoroughly national God ever produced in India, does no longer represent the powers of nature save incidentally; he with his attendant gods, as Pushan, is the embodiment of the modern, fantastic and imaginative Hindoo folk-lore and humoristic poetry, of *human* intelligence, passion, and ethics. A great contrast is observed between the hymns directed to Agni and Soma and those addressed to Indra; the former are priestly and mystic poems, regular, uniform, and replete with formulated wisdom, while the latter are sprightly, crisp, and lively productions of the popular mind. It is therefore wrong to adduce mythologic comparisons and similes from all the surrounding peoples of Aryan and foreign descent; the majority of these prove nothing for Vedic

passages, for they were the utterances of different nations and times, and conclusions based upon them will therefore lead into error. This is evidently a fling directed against the method followed by Ad. Bastian.

In the first volume the articles on myths are by Geldner, those on textual critics and linguistics by Pischel, who sometimes becomes quite "warmed up" in his polemics against authors emitting opinions differing too much from him. This portion will be of great utility to the Vedic linguistic scholar.

King Purûravas' love to the goddess Urvaçî¹ is spoken of at length by Geldner, because the Hindoo commentators of later periods relate this myth in several interesting tales differing among themselves. King Purûravas declares his affection to the Apsaras (or *courtesan*) Urvaçî, who reciprocates his feelings by entering into an agreement (*samaya*), which results in a Gandharva-marriage, a term which Geldner explains by *Gewissens-Ehe*. Such marriages, he says, are customary with the Apsaras; the Gandharvas, claiming possession of her by an older title, make use of this compact to involve the king in a conflict between his promise and his duties towards her. In this agreement it was stipulated that the king should "love" the woman three times a day, but in case she refused, he should keep away from her, and he should never appear before her in a nude state. After she had borne a son to him, he broke the agreement against his own will, and she left him, only to find him again, a long time after, in the woods in a state of despair. She surrenders the son, but refuses to join him again, though their marriage had lasted fifty-nine years. The Gandharvas teach him how he can get possession of her in heaven by achieving works, pleasing to the deities, upon this earth.

Albert S. Gatschet.

AN INTERNATIONAL IDIOM. A Manual of the Oregon Trade Language, or "Chinook Jargon." By HORATIO HALE. London: Whitaker & Co. 1890. 12mo, pp. 63.

Professor Horatio Hale, to whom I am indebted for the first scientific account of the "Chinook Jargon," — published in the records of the United States Exploring Expedition, — has given a new history and analysis of this interesting language. The folk-lorist is particularly interested in the growth of the new language and the literature that has arisen in it. The author, who had occasion to become acquainted with the jargon at a comparatively recent date of its existence, traces its origin and gradual spread over the North Pacific coast, and gives examples of songs composed by missionaries, and of a sermon preached by Rev. M. Eels in the idiom. The rest of the book is taken up by a dictionary of the trade language.

F. B.

¹ This truly national legend is contained in the obscurely worded hymn or song, Rigveda, 10, 95.